

Message Text

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EXDIS

FOLLOWING SENT ACTION SECSTATE INFO BANGKOK, SAIGON,
VIENTIANE FROM PHNOM PENH SEP 3.

QUOTE PHNOM PENH 9240.

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MILI, CB, PINS

SUBJECT: PSYCHOLOGICAL AND INFORMATION OPERATIONS IN CAMBODIA
(PPOG)

REF: STATE 169458(EXDIS)

1. EMBASSY APPRECIATE VIEWS AND SUGGESTIONS OF
WASHINGTON AGENCIES CONVEYED REFTEL PPOG MESSAGE AND
OFFERS FOLLOWING COMMENTS.

2. ANY EFFORT TO PROPAGANDIZE CAMBODIAN TELEVISION
VIEWERS IN KHMER-LANGUAGE PROGRAMS BEAMED OVER SAIGON TV
STATION WOULD BE SUSPECT, DISCREDITED AND PROBABLY RESENTED
BY MOST KHMER, IN VIEW OF TRADITIONAL FEAR AND ANIMOSITY
WITH WHICH KHMER REGARD THEIR VIETNAMESE NEIGHBORS-BOTH
NORTHERN AND SOUTHERN.

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3. WITH REGARD TO QUALITY OF PHNOMPENH TV'S
PROGRAMMING, WE ARE SATISFIED IT REFLECTS KHMER TALENT
FOR AUDIO-VISUAL PRODUCTIONS, DANCE, STAGE, MUSIC AND
CINEMA. DUE CURFEW RESTRICTIONS IMPOSED UPON STATION

PERSONNEL, CURRENT DAILY PROGRAMMING SCHEDULE IS 1730-2000 HOURS. WE BELIEVE CURFEW PROVIDES UNIQUE CAPTIVE AUDIENCE, HOWEVER, AND INTEND URGE EXTENSION OF EVENING PROGRAM SCHEDULE.

4. WITH REGARD TO POSSIBLE DISTRIBUTION OF SMALL, US-SUPPLIED TRANSISTOR RADIOS TO GKR, WE HAVE RECENTLY RECEIVED INQUIRY TO THIS EFFECT FROM FANK WHICH WOULD USE THIS MEDIUM TO INDOCTRINATE AND INFORM TROOPS AND COUNTERACT FUNK PROPAGANDA DISTORTIONS AND INACCURACIES. WE HAVE ASKED FANK TO PROVIDE US WITH DETAILED PROPOSAL TO INCLUDE RADIO PROGRAM PRODUCTION ASSETS, AVAILABILITY OF TECHNICAL AND PROGRAM PERSONNEL AND PROVISIONS FOR RADIO REPAIR AND ACCOUNTABILITY. WE ARE ALSO INTERESTED IN RESULTS OF LAST ISSUANCE OF RADIOS BY USG IN 1970. DUE REMOVAL OF ALL BUT MOST ESSENTIAL CURRENT FILES FROM THE EMBASSY, IT WOULD BE HELPFUL IF PPOG WERE TO RESEARCH END-USER REPORTS OF THAT PROJECT AND INFORM US OF EVALUATION AT THE TIME.

5. WE HAVE SERIOUS RESERVATIONS ABOUT THE FEASIBILITY OF INTERRUPTING FUNK BROADCASTS (AKI) WITH A STRONGER GKR RADIO SIGNAL AS A MEANS OF IMMEDIATELY COUNTERING FUNK PROPAGANDA. WHILE WE RECOGNIZE POSSIBLE BENEFITS OF SUCH A TACTIC, IT WOULD HAVE TO MORE SWIFTLY EXECUTED THAN WE BELIEVE KHMER PERFORMANCE HAS DEMONSTRATED IS LIKELY. WE ALSO BELIEVE IT MIGHT BE PUBLICIZED AS EVIDENCE OF GKR'S FEAR OF THE IMPACT OF FUNK VIEWPOINTS UPON KHMER PEOPLE. SUCH A TACTIC COULD WELL STIMULATE MORE AUDIENCE INTEREST IN FUNK BROADCASTS THAN IS PROBABLY THE CASE AT PRESENT, AND MIGHT EVEN DEGRADE GKR PROGRAMS IN MINDS OF VIEWERS. WE ALSO ASSUME THAT OUTRIGHT JAMMING OF TONKIN-BASED AKI WOULD BE TECHNICALLY DIFFICULT, EXPENSIVE, AND POLITICALLY COSTLY TO GKR IN THE FACE OF EXPECTABLE FUNK CHARGES THAT SUCH COUNTER-BROADCASTS CONSTITUTED ILLEGAL JAMMING.

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6. WE BELIEVE COUNTER-PROPAGANDA IS BEST DISSEMINATED IN REGULARLY PROGRAMMED OUTPUT. ALL CURRENT GKR RADIO PROGRAMS, FOR EXAMPLE, ARE HEAVILY ORIENTED TOWARD PRESENTATION OF GKR POLICY LINES, PATRIOTIC THEMES, NEWS, POLITICAL COMMENTARY, RELIGION AND COUNTER-PROPAGANDA. THIS IS A FULL PROGRAM SCHEDULE LASTING FROM 0500-2300 HOURS. FROM 2300-0200 HOURS, GKR RADIO IS COMPLETELY TAKEN OVER BY FANK-SPONSORED RADIO IN PROGRAMS TARGETING BOTH MILITARY AND CIVILIAN RADIO AUDIENCES WITH EVEN MORE HEAVILY CONCENTRATED EDUCATION AND INDOCTRINATION. (FANK ALSO TAKES OVER GKR TELEVISION FOR TWO AND ONE-HALF HOURS EVERY FRIDAY). WE BELIEVE GKR AND FANK RADIO IS ALREADY IN HIGH GEAR IN THESE RESPECTS.

7. WE WOULD WELCOME ANY CAREFULLY CONSIDERED PROPAGANDA THEMES FOR INSERTION INTO GKR PROPAGANDA OUTPUT IN ALL MEDIA. WE HAVE RECENTLY EMBARKED UPON A DISCREET, LOW-KEY AND OBVIOUSLY HIGHLY SENSITIVE EFFORT TO SUPPLY THEMES TO COL. AM RONG IN HIS DUAL CAPACITY AS FANK SPOKESMAN AND HEAD OF FANK 2ND POLITICAL BUREAU PSYCHOLOGICAL WARFARE ACTIVITIES. WE CONSIDER THIS MAY BE A USEFUL, ALTHOUGH VULNERABLE, OPERATION. WE SHOULD BE PLEASED TO USE THIS CHANNEL FOR SUPPLYING APPROPRIATE PPOG THEMES.

8. WITH REGARD TO SUGGESTION THAT POSTERS SHOULD BE HUNG TO STIFFEN THE BACKS OF PHNOM PENH RESIDENTS, WE WOULD NOTE THAT MUCH OF PHNOM PENH AND OTHER PROVINCIAL CAPITALS AND TOWNS ARE VIRTUALLY PLASTERED WITH A VARIETY OF SUCH POSTERS AS RESULT OF COORDINATED EFFORTS OF LON NOL HIMSELF, AM RONG, FANK PSYWAR, EMBASSY, MEDTC, CINCPAC, USARPAC AND 7TH PSYOPS. THIS HAS BEEN A SUCCESSFUL JOINT VENTURE AND WE INTEND TO CONTINUE IT.

9. PPOG IS CORRECT IN ITS UNDERSTANDING OF STRONG KHMER RESISTANCE AT ALL LEVELS TO SUGGESTIONS THAT FANK SHOULD PERMIT INTEGRATION OF KI MILITARY UNITS AND OFFICERS INTO ITS RANKS. WE REMAIN SEIZED OF THIS PROBLEM AND WILL REPORT ANY NEW DEVELOPMENTS.

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10. WITH REGARD TO AM RONG'S PRESS CONFERENCES, WE RECOGNIZE HE IS NO "ZORTHIAN." HE IS, HOWEVER, MORE EFFECTIVE WITH SKEPTICAL WESTERN PRESS CORPS HERE THAN IS GENERALLY RECOGNIZED ELSEWHERE. AM RONG, FURTHERMORE, IS FULLY AWARE OF IMPORTANCE OF EXPLOITING ATROCITIES, DISSENSION WITHIN KI RANKS, AND SIMILAR DEVELOPMENTS. A REVIEW OF AM RONG'S DAILY BRIEFINGS, HIS NEWS ANALYSES OVER FANK-PRODUCED TV PROGRAMS, AND OF ALL GKR MEDIA OUTPUT, IN FACT, DEMONSTRATES CONTINUOUS SYSTEMATIC KHMER EFFORTS ALONG THESE LINES. AS STORY OF KI DISSENSION, UPRISINGS, AND CONFLICTS BETWEEN KI AND VIETNAMESE COMMUNIST UNITS EMERGES MORE CLEARLY, WE ARE CONFIDENT GKR WILL EXPLOIT IT TO MAXIMUM EXTENT POSSIBLE. IF THE WESTERN PRESS CORPS HERE DOES NOT CARRY THESE STORIES, IT WON'T BE BECAUSE OF A LACK OF EFFORT ON THE PART OF THE GKR OR THIS EMBASSY.

11. WITH REGARD TO QUESTION OF DETAILING A VOA CORRESPONDENT ON TDY BASIS TO PHNOM PENH, WE REGRET CONGRESSIONALLY-IMPOSED CEILING ON USG PERSONNEL IN CAMBODIA RULES OUT ANY SUCH CONSIDERATION AT THE PRESENT TIME.
SWANK UNQUOTE RUSH

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